

# THE SUEZ CANAL.

STUDIED IN THE LIGHT OF OUR GREAT DITCH AT PANAMA.

(Special Correspondence of the Deseret News by Frank G. Carpenter.)

## PORT TEWFIK—Will the Panama Canal pay?

My investigations at Port Said and Suez show that it will, and that Uncle Sam will some day find it his most profitable investment. I have just come through the Suez canal, and am now on a German steamer anchored in Port Tewfik, not far from its southern mouth. Our trip from the Mediterranean to the Gulf of Suez took just 18 hours, and it cost the ship a toll of \$100 per hour. For the privilege of passing through it had to pay \$7,500, and, in addition, \$2 for every man, woman and child on board. All the canal company did in this case was to reach out its hand and take in the money. The only had to furnish its own coal and steam its way through, and this money was merely for the privilege of passing.

But this ship is comparatively small. Its tonnage is only 3,000, and many of the vessels now going through are much larger. Nearly every day steamers pay \$10,000 each for their passage, and tolls of \$15,000 and \$20,000 are not uncommon. When an army transport passes the men on board are charged \$2 a head, and this adds enormously to the canal receipts. Indeed, a war vessel knocks down all other stocks sends that of the Suez canal sky high.

## WHAT THE SUEZ CANAL PAYS.

If Panama should pay proportionately with Suez the United States government will realize from it something like 14 per cent every year out of it. The money actually invested in the canal of Suez was \$100,000,000, and its receipts last year were over \$22,000,000. After paying all its running expenses it has more than \$14,000,000 left for dividends and other purposes, and its stock is now worth more on the market than that of the Standard Oil company.

Within the past year or so the rate of toll has been considerably reduced, but they are still \$1.50 per ton on every ship which passes through. The tonnage now amounts to between 13,000,000 and 14,000,000 per year, and it grows right along. It has almost doubled since 1859, and the rate of increase is such, as estimated by T. P. Shonts, the former head of the Panama canal, that if it continues the receipts will be quadrupled by the beginning of the next century. That time it will be over 40,000,000 tons, and for tonnage alone, not including the charges for passengers, it will then bring in the enormous amount of \$75,000,000 per annum. Mr. Shonts thinks the Panama canal will be open to traffic in 1914, and that 5,000,000 tons of shipping will pass through the first year. The rate will be higher than that now paid at Suez. It will probably be \$2 per ton, and at that Panama will have for its first year a gross income of \$10,000,000, not counting the sea and land tolls.

Applying the same ratio of increase which the Suez canal has developed since its beginning, the volume of the Panama canal will amount to more than 12,000,000 tons, and, at the then reduced rate of \$1.50 per ton, its income should be \$18,000,000 per annum. Mr. Shonts has estimated that if we make the sea level canal it will cost as \$272,000,000, and that the lock canal can be built for about half that sum, with such dividend prospects as to show the wisdom of the initial expense does not matter.

## JOHN BULL'S BIG BARGAIN IN CANAL SHARES.

The Suez canal is now controlled by the British. It was originated by a Frenchman, financed by French bankers, and engineered by French brains. It is the bulk of the profits go to John Bull.

When Ferdinand De Lesseps proposed to build the canal the English showed at the suggestion. When he got a concession from the khedive, Said Pasha, they actually opposed its construction, and they did everything they could to stop the work. The French received no help from any other nation, but nevertheless they went on. They began digging in 1859, and it was just about 10 years later that the waters of the Mediterranean were allowed to flow through into the Red sea. The canal was opened in November, 1869, and in the following year about 50,000 tons of shipping went through it. In less than five years this had increased to more than 2,000,000 tons and the gross income to about \$5,000,000 per annum. The British then saw that it was a good thing and cast about to find some method of getting control. They succeeded through Ismail Pasha, who was then on the throne of Egypt. Old Ismail was one of the most extravagant tyrants who has ever squeezed money out of an oppressed people. He had aided the French in building the canal, and had spent something like \$20,000,000 on the ceremony by which it was opened. He had borrowed money at 20 and 40 per cent interest, and was head over heels in debt. In the allotment of shares 176,000 out of the 400,000 had gone to the Egyptian government, and when the khedive became hard up he concluded to put them on the market. The English cabinet got wind of the matter, and at the same time the French minister at Cairo telegraphed Paris that unless "France bought the Egyptian shares tomorrow they would be purchased by England."

At that time parliament was not in session, but Lord Beaconsfield and one or two others took the responsibility of making the trade. They borrowed \$20,000,000 from the Rothschilds, and before the world could blink they had the bargain. The Egyptian shares were sold to the British treasury and John Bull had the control. He had not, it is true, 51 per cent of the entire capital stock, but the other holdings were so scattered that the seven-eighths which he owned gave him the whip hand, and that he has held ever since.

As it is now, no large block of the common stock appears to be held by any individual, corporation or other government. Indeed, at a meeting some years ago, the largest shareholder, outside of Great Britain, was a Frenchman, who had a little more than 1,500 shares.

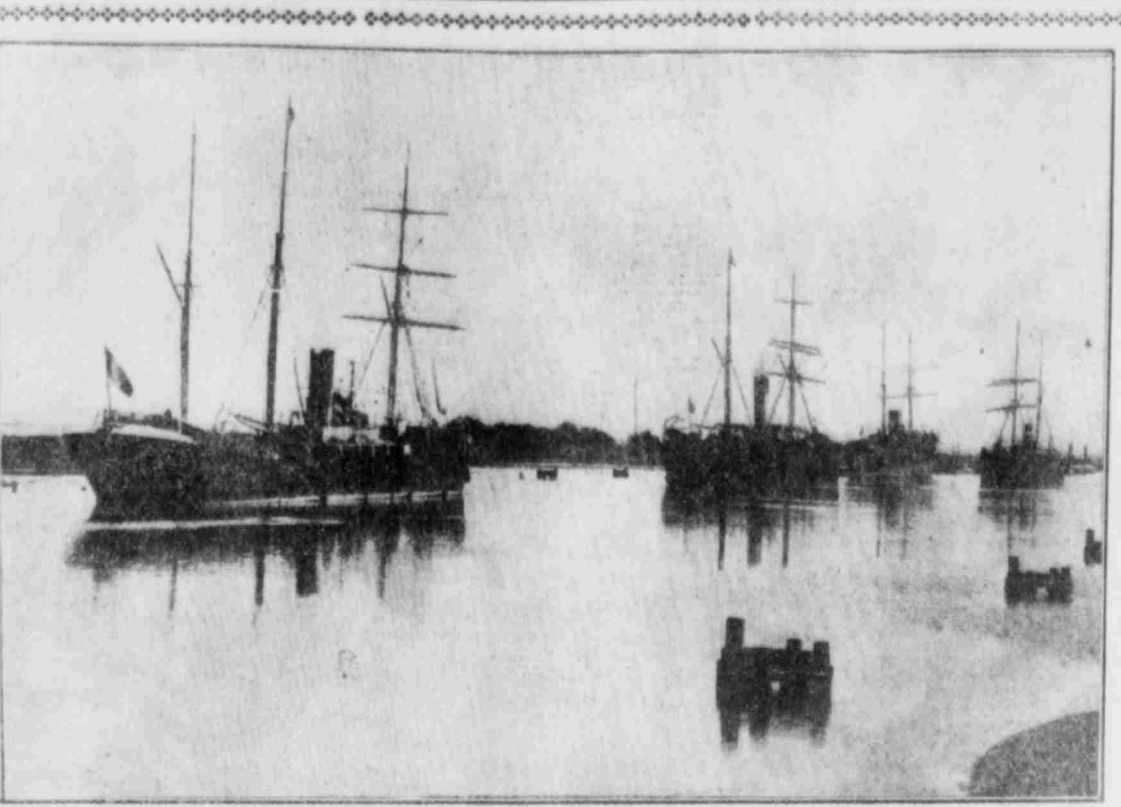
That \$20,000,000 was one of the best investments John Bull has ever made. At its present market value his stock is worth \$155,000,000, and it has gone up more than \$1,000,000 during the past year. He has already received from it more than \$60,000,000 in dividends, and by his control of the canal has enormously increased his power and prestige among the nations of the world. His money gain, however, is not quite as great as that of the original stockholders. They paid only about \$100 per share, while he paid a little more than \$112. If the Panama canal turns out anything like as well, Uncle Sam will have money to burn.

## PANAMA VS SUEZ.

I know the Panama canal well. I visited it in 1859, when it was in the hands of the French, and I have spent several weeks there since the Americans have been in control. I have gone over it from end to end with my engineers, have watched the new steam shovels gouging the earth out of the Culebra cut and have traveled in a canoe down that part of it which is to run through the bed of the Chagres river. I have seen the canal three times and have made notes of its construction.

The two undertakings are vitally different. The Suez canal is little more than a great ditch through the desert,

## How It Was Built and Its Enormous Profits—How John Bull Got Control—His Big Bargain in Canal Shares—The Whole Work of Suez Less Than That of the Culebra Cut—Will Panama Pay?—What Egypt Gets Out of the Canal—A Trip Through It by Moonlight—Something About the Improvements Now Making—Will a New Canal be Built?



SAILING THROUGH THE BITTER LAKE, SUEZ CANAL.

Photographed for the "News" by Frank G. Carpenter.

and although it is just about twice as long as that planned for Panama it does not compare with the latter in its mechanical difficulties. The ground here is comparatively level. That of the Panama route is up hill and down, it goes right across the backbone of the Andes, and we shall have to take out of the eight or 10 miles of the Culebra cut as much earth and rock as the Egyptians lifted in their 100 miles at Suez. The amount excavated here was 100,000,000 cubic yards, or just about 100,000,000 tons of dead weight. While I was at Panama Mr. Wallace, who was then the chief engineer, told me that the rock taken out of Culebra would be 100,000,000 cubic yards, and, as I figured it then, it would just equal a ditch three feet wide and three feet deep and long enough to go two times around this 25,000 mile globe with 10,000 miles of ditch to spare.

This great ditch at Suez, however, was so made that the dirt and sand taken out could be thrown on the banks and left there; that of the Culebra cut has to be carried by cars some miles away and the greater part of the material is rock rather than sand. It is so hard that most of it has to be blasted out, and it requires heavy machinery to handle it.

The Suez canal was excavated almost by hand. Twenty thousand and more of the Egyptian fellahs were employed upon it at a time, and they scooped up much of the dirt in their hands and

carried it away in baskets. They were paid from 10 to 15 cents a day at the start, and boys under 12 got only 5 cents. After a time they were not paid at all. The khedive agreed to furnish them, and they worked for the French under the lash just as the Hebrews did for the Egyptians in the days of Pharaoh ages ago. Our steam shovels are estimated to be each equal to the work of 500 men. We have some which will lift five wagon loads of earth per minute, gouging it out of the hills and dropping it on to the cars. When the canal construction is in full play we shall have 100 such shovels in operation both night and day. They will be equal to a force of 50,000 men, and we shall be able to handle our excavation more cheaply than the French did that of Suez. This will be so, notwithstanding our native labor will be paid from 10 to 20 and more times as much as the French paid the Egyptians. Such Americans as are working at Panama are getting more money than they can make in the United States, and the native carpenters, painters and masons are receiving more per day. With the present canal-dredging machinery and steam shovels this work at Suez could probably be reproduced at one-half its actual cost, and the actual cost was probably quadrupled through the money spent in graft, extravagance and high interest rates by the French and Egyptians in connection with it. When Ismail Pasha was forced from the throne

he left Egypt in debt to the amount of \$500,000,000, the most of which was directly or indirectly caused by the canal.

## WHAT EGYPT GETS.

One would think that Egypt ought to receive a big revenue for the right of way through her country and the canal which her money and her people practically built. By the original concession with Said Pasha she was to receive 15 per cent of the net profits for the entire term of the concession, which was 99 years. But after Ismail Pasha was deposed the Egyptian government, finding itself without money or credit, sold this claim on the profits to the credit foncier of France for a little more than \$4,000,000, and the only interest it now has in the canal is in the trade which the ships passing through bring to the country. Had Egypt retained that 15 per cent it would have received last year more than \$2,000,000 out of the tolls, and with a few years it could have recouped itself for all Ismail Pasha's extravagance. During the term of the concession it could easily have made itself the richest country of the world. As it is, the canal, with all its property, becomes the possession of Egypt in 1956, when the canal receipts at the present rate of increase will be so enormous as to make this little country with its comparatively small population about the richest of all the world.

I spent all of last night on the Suez canal. It was the afternoon when our ship left Port Said, and as night fell we were in the heart of the Libyan desert. The air was clear, and the scene was weird but beautiful. The stars of the tropics, brighter by far than those at home, made the heavens resplendent, and a great round moon of burning copper turned the famous waterway into a stream of molten silver. We could look out over the silent desert as we plowed our way through and now and then see a caravan of four or five camels, with their riders huddled up and down under the moon. Our own pathway was made brighter by the light of electricity. We had one blazing globe at our mast-head, led by a dynamo on deck, and another at our prow. The latter threw its rays this way and that across the channel in front of the steamer, turning the waters to an opalescent blue reminding one of the Blue Grotto of Capri. We passed many ships. In the distance they appeared only as two blinding spots in the water, the reflectors which all vessels are required to keep lighted as they pass through. As the ships came nearer they rose ghost-like up from the water, their masts, hulls and rigging with the fiery eyes making one think of demons about to attack him.

The trip through the canal is slow. The ships are allowed to go only five or six miles an hour, and now and then they have to tie up to posts which have been set into the banks of the canal to allow other steamers to pass. These posts are to be seen everywhere along both sides of the waterway from Port Said to Suez. In most places they are about 100 feet apart, and are arranged that ships can be made stationary as others go by.

Parts of the banks are walled with stones to prevent the sand falling in and filling up the canal, but notwithstanding this the dredges have to be kept at work all the year round. Not far from Port Said I saw great pumps mounted by means sucking the sand from the bottom of the channel and carrying it through pipes far out over the desert. I am told that the process of cleaning and deepening the waterway is always going on.

## THE IMPROVEMENTS AT SUEZ.

The Suez canal of 1869 is far different from that which was opened in 1859. As originally planned the channel was less than 25 feet deep and so constructed that it could not have accommodated the shipping which goes through today. It is now about 30 feet deep, and there are improvements under way to make its depth 35 feet. Since the beginning of last year ships with a draft of 27 feet have been allowed to pass through, and they will come when ships of 33 and 34 feet draft will be admitted. The canal has been widened so that its average width at the surface is about 300 feet, and the curves in it have been rounded off so as to shorten the time of transit and enable ships to pass the more easily. Within the past year or so more than 22,000,000 tons of earth, mud and sand have been taken out of it, and the shipping facilities have been greatly improved both at Port Tewfik and at Port Said. Here at the southern end of the canal they are now dredging out basins which are intended to accommodate the colliers and tank steamers carrying coal oil, and at Port Said the coaling arrangements have been so improved that the largest steamers can load thousands of tons of coal in a very few hours.

## WILL A NEW CANAL BE BUILT?

These improvements have been made on account of the crowded condition of the canal and the imperative necessity of deepening it in order to accommodate the big steamers now building. As it is it is a question whether 35 feet will long be deep enough for ships grow bigger and bigger and their draft deeper and deeper from year to year. There has been a demand for a second canal on account

of the crowding, and the necessity even of the world have complained again and again of the heavy tolls. Not long ago it was stated that the money was ready in London to build a British canal at a cost from \$20,000,000 to \$25,000,000, and it was suggested that such a canal might be constructed from the town of El Arish on the Mediterranean on the borders of Egypt to Akabah on the Red sea beyond the Egyptian frontier. Such a canal would take advantage of the Gulf of Akabah, but it would, as the Suez canal, according to the concessions granted to the canal company, any Egyptian canal made parallel to the present one will have to be made by it or with its consent.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.



(From Top to Bottom) JOE LOPEZ, AMIEL NEWMAN, HECTOR BARBEAU, ELMINE TEENHOUSE.

## WILL WALK TO 'FRISCO.

Four Jersey boys, eager for adventure, have started for the Pacific coast on a walking tour and don't care where they get there. They are Joe Lopez, Amiel Newman, Hector Barbeau and Elmine Teenhouse, and all live in Jersey City. They gave up good positions to undertake the walk and believe that their fortunes will be bettered by the knowledge they will gather on their tour. They carry blankets and will sleep out of doors whenever they can. They expect to reach San Francisco in April next.

## CHRONIC TOPER'S AWFUL SENTENCE.

(Continued from page seventeen.)

where he for several years held court they tried and sentenced him to die. He was to be shot, but a war among the soldiers suggested that a quick death was too good for a rascal who would water wine and that he should be imprisoned for life and condemned to drink nothing but water for the rest of his days.

## BECAME ANNUAL PAGEANT.

For many years the villagers made the day of his capture a fest day. They would visit the castle and re-enact the scenes of its storming and finally the affair became an annual pageant. Not a year has been missed. There is now a society in Branberg which takes charge of the pageant and a similar society in Berlin. Special trains are run from this city and also from all the surrounding wine districts of the Rhine to Branberg. The day is the greatest one in the year for the wine grower. The society has developed until now it is general and all who favor pure wine belong to it. It teaches yearly the lesson that wine must not be adulterated. A royal prince is invited annually as the guest of honor and a regiment of soldiers, 1,000 strong, is drafted into the district to keep order among the crowds.

The villagers alone take part. The various historical characters are allotted among them. Men, women and children become actors for that one day. Many of the women enact the part of pages. The village is a tiny one and as there are 200 people to be taken the whole populace has to dress up and the appearance of various fat and lean women and men in garb of the middle ages adds to the enjoyment of the sightseers.

The toper of the village is selected as the Margrave and is placed in the castle. Then led by the villagers, armed as soldiers of the fourteenth century, rush across the drawbridge and seize the castle. Then the poor wretch who represents the Margrave is seized, loaded with chains, and dragged out into the great courtyard where the trial is held.

The president of the court delivers a homily on the wickedness of adulterating Rhine wine and others make speeches showing the awful consequences of putting water into good wine. Then the village toper is sentenced to drink water only in the future and the pageant proper ends.

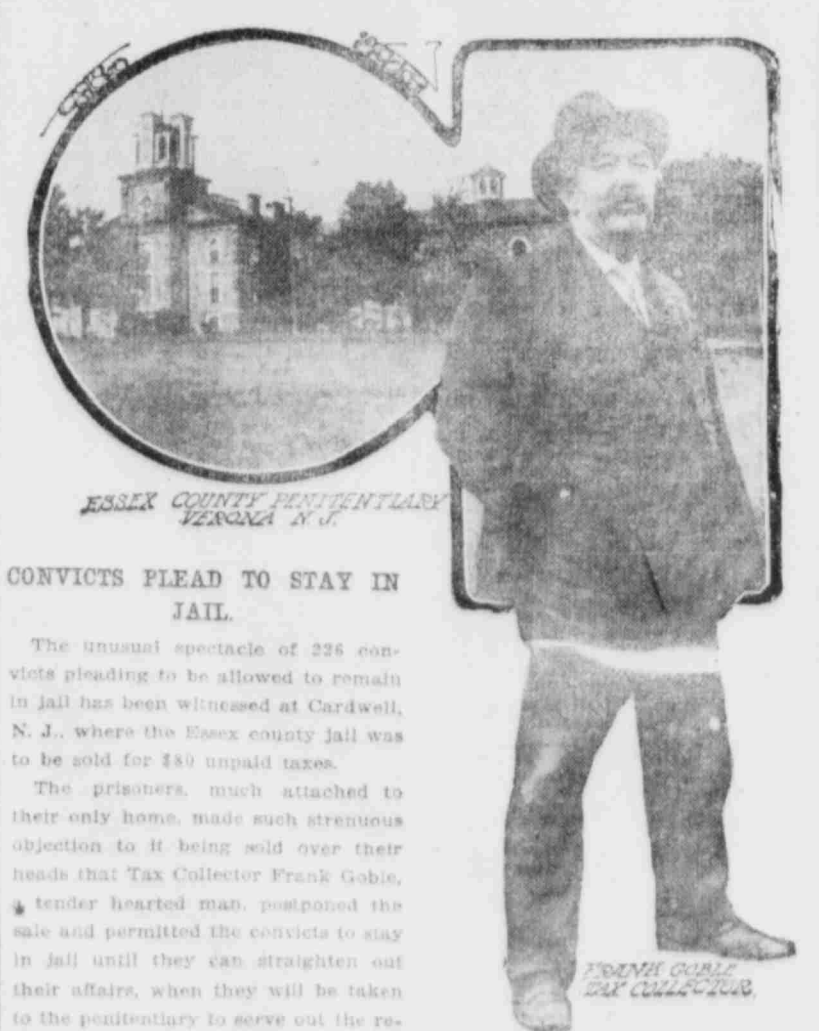
## DIRE PENALTIES.

It is a hard day for the poor toper, though, for everyone offers him brimming goblets of wine which he dare not touch. Should he be caught drinking anything but water dire penalties are visited on him including a bath in the Rhine.

The whole affair is carried out with tremendous pomp and is free to everyone. The society raises a fund every year for the expenses such as they are.

The fete is always held at the close of the wine season and is just over. This year Prince Joachim Albert, the warrior prince who lately returned from the little German war in the Cameroons was present and presided at the fete and heard the sentence pronounced.

HENRY DITMAR.



ESSEX COUNTY PENITENTIARY, VERONA, N. J.

## CONVICTS PLEAD TO STAY IN JAIL.

The unusual spectacle of 226 convicts pleading to be allowed to remain in jail has been witnessed at Cardwell, N. J., where the Essex county jail was to be sold for \$20 unpaid taxes.

The prisoners, much attached to their only home, made such strenuous objection to it being sold over their heads that Tax Collector Frank Goble, a tender hearted man, postponed the sale and permitted the convicts to stay in jail until they can straighten out their affairs, when they will be taken to the penitentiary to serve out the remainder of their sentences.

## Some English Municipal Economics

Ashes, kitchen scraps and house refuse generally in Nottingham are placed in metal barrels or larger receptacles at the rear of the premises and removed weekly by city employees. The total weight of this refuse is about 1,500 tons a week. It is burned in two city refuse destructors. This requires no other fuel except a little for starting the fire on Mondays, and enough steam is produced by the destruction to provide electricity for a third of the needs of the tramway system. Some of the electricity is also used for lighting purposes. Only tin cans and the like are separated from the refuse and sold. All the rest is destroyed.

The city owns two destructors costing, respectively, \$85,932 and \$102,192. The more expensive one is equipped with electric machinery costing \$12,165, connected with the tramway lines. The cost of wages and other expenses of the destructors averages about 35 cents a ton of refuse burned. The average quantity of electric units produced is 44.23 per ton. Though the system of converting refuse into electricity works admirably here and is a saving to the taxpayers, it is stated that only 49 other towns in the country use anything similar.

Besides electricity the Nottingham corporation produces from the house refuse more street-paving blocks than

it can use. A plant connected with the main destructor mixes the clinkers with cement and places the composition under hydraulic pressure. The product is said to be even harder than stone and can be used for building purposes as well as street paving. The operation, being new, is still somewhat experimental, but the engineer in charge says the product will wear longer than the paving stones commonly used, while costing the city less than half as much. Another destructor, larger than either of the two now operating, is contemplated by the city authorities.

The sewage of Nottingham is spread upon a farm of 184 acres about five miles from the city. The land, having a gravelly subsoil, is well suited to filtration. About 10,000,000 gallons of sewage are run upon the farm every 24 hours. The total annual expense of the farm is about \$50,000. The total income from the farm amounts to substantially the same—consular report.

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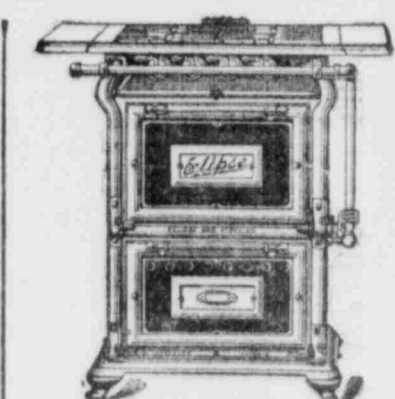
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